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NYC CRIME

NYPD training chief Juanita Holmes irked NYC top cop Keechant Sewell in Cardi B, training flaps — still lands new city job

By Thomas Tracy and Rocco Parascandola

New York Daily News and Police Bureau Chief • Mar 09, 2023 at 4:11 pm



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Twice, NYPD Chief of Training Juanita Holmes ran afoul of her boss, Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell — and that was enough to end her 36-year NYPD career, police sources said Thursday.

Holmes got in trouble by inviting rapper Cardi B to a police event and by going over Sewell's head by getting Mayor Adams' backing for a change to the department's physical training requirements, said the sources.



But Holmes seems to have landed on her feet — Adams has named her to be commissioner of the city's Probation Department.

Adams described Holmes as a "dynamic leader who understands the importance of both safety and justice."

"Her vision to enhance the [probation] department's focus on upstream solutions to aid people leaving the criminal justice system and combat recidivism are critical to our mission to keep New York the safest big city in America," he said in a statement.



Chief of Training Juanita Holmes (Barry Williams/for New York Daily News)

Holmes irked Sewell with her invite to Cardi B to a “Girl’s Talk” event at the NYPD academy on Feb. 24 where the hip hop star talked and danced with young girls as part of her court-ordered community service for her role in a Queens strip club assault in 2018.



The invite, made without Sewell's knowledge, forced academy supervisors to scramble by shuffling 400 recruits to different classrooms for an important academic test that was to be held in the auditorium where Cardi B appeared.

Sources said Sewell fumed over the incident in the belief it showed Holmes wasn't focused on her job's core mission and gave the impression the NYPD had no issue with the rapper's bawdy lyrics, rough-around-the-edges persona and her run-ins with the law.

The final straw, sources said, was the revelation Holmes lobbied to eliminate for recruits a requirement they be able to complete a 1½-mile run in 14 minutes and 21 seconds. Sewell shot the idea down because she viewed it as lowering the standards to become a police officer, sources said.

But Holmes, who believed the running requirement was unnecessary and an obstacle for many female recruits, did an end-run around Sewell and used connections at City Hall to persuade Mayor Adams to agree with her, sources said.



NYPD Commissioner Keechant Sewell (Barry Williams/for New York Daily News)

The elimination of the run meant 42 recruits who didn't graduate because they failed the test were allowed back on the job.

Eliminating the run, one police source said, "was a terrible look."



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"The police commissioner continues to set the bar high for what it takes to be a cop," the source said. "She's the last one looking to lower the standards. But we have a three-star chief who feels differently and is getting her way over the police commissioner."

It wasn't clear Thursday who would replace Holmes at the NYPD. Nor was it clear why she was given another job, as opposed to being encouraged to retire, as often happens when moves are made at the upper levels of the police department.

Holmes joined the department in July 1987. She hails from a family of cops and other law enforcement members, most of them women.



Cardi B (MICHAEL TRAN/AFP via Getty Images)

She retired from the force in 2018 as the first Black woman to run a borough command for a job in the bank industry, but returned a year later. Last year, she threw her hat in the ring to be the first female police commissioner.

Even though Holmes ended up with a new city position, she erred by crossing Sewell, said the police source.

"This is a hierachal organization," the source said. "You cannot have that."

With Michael Gartland



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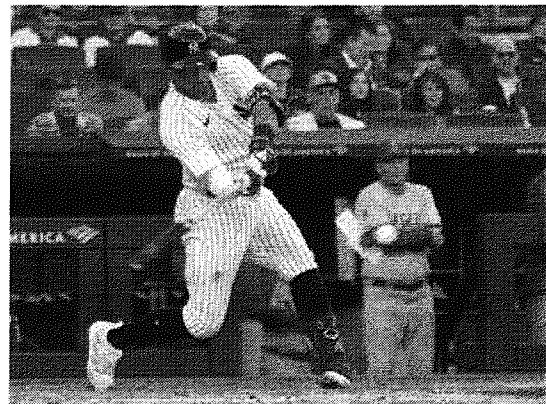


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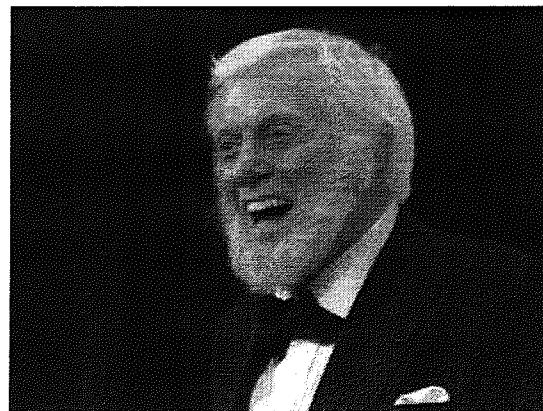
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